

## Justices signal they'll OK new abortion limits, may toss Roe

By MARK SHERMAN and JESSICA GRESKO

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Supreme Court's conservative majority on Wednesday signaled it would uphold Mississippi's 15-week ban on abortion and may go much further to overturn the nationwide right to abortion that has existed for nearly 50 years. The fate of the court's historic 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion throughout the United States and its 1992 ruling in Planned Parenthood v. Casey, which reaffirmed Roe, probably won't be known until next June.

But after nearly two hours of arguments, all six conservative justices, including three appointed by former President Donald Trump, indicated they would uphold

the Mississippi law.

At the very least, such a decision would undermine Roe and Casey, which allow states to regulate but not ban abortion up until the point of viability, at roughly 24 weeks.

And there was also substantial support among the conservative justices for getting rid of Roe and Casey altogether.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh, a Trump appointee, asked a series of questions about whether the court would be better off withdrawing from the abortion debate and letting states decide.

"Why should the court be the arbiter?" Kavanaugh asked. "There'll be different access in Mississippi and New York, Alabama and California."

Continued on next page



Anti-abortion protesters surround abortion rights advocates as both groups demonstrate in front of the U.S. Supreme Court, Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021, in Washington, as the court hears arguments in a case from Mississippi, where a 2018 law would ban abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, well before viability.

Associated Press

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#### Continued from Front

Abortion would soon become illegal or severely restricted in roughly half the states if Roe and Casey are overturned, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research organization that supports abortion rights. Legislatures in many Republican-led states are poised for action depending on the Supreme Court's next decision.

The court's three liberal justices said that reversing Roe and Casey would significantly damage the court's legitimacy.

"Will this institution survive the stench that this creates in the public perception that the Constitution and its reading are just political acts?" Justice Sonia Sotomayor asked.

Justice Elena Kagan said the abortion decisions are "part of the fabric of women's place in this country." Among the conservatives, Chief Justice John Roberts appeared most interested in a less sweeping ruling that would uphold the Mississippi law, but not explicitly overrule Roe and Casey. "That may be what they're asking for, but the thing at issue before us today is 15 weeks," Roberts said, alluding to Mississippi's call to overturn the broader cases.

Even upholding the 15-week ban would mean rejecting the decades-old viability line. Abortion rights supporters say that would still effectively overturn Roe and leave no principled line for when abortions might be banned.

Justice Neil Gorsuch, another Trump appointee, suggested the lack of a rigorous alternative might be a reason to overrule Roe and Casey entirely.

Supporters of both sides in the abortion debate filled the sidewalk and street in front of the court, their dueling rallies audible even



**Abortion rights advocates hold signs that read "Abortion is Essential" as they demonstrate in front of the U.S. Supreme Court, Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021, in Washington, as the court hears arguments in a case from Mississippi, where a 2018 law would ban abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, well before viability.**

from inside the building. Opposing signs read such sentiments as "Her Body Her Choice" and "God Hates the Shedding of Innocent Blood." The court stepped up security measures, including closing off some streets around the building. The case came to a court with a 6-3 conservative majority that has been transformed by the justices named by Trump, who had pledged to appoint justices who oppose abortion rights. The court had never agreed to hear a case over an abortion ban so early in pregnancy until all three Trump appointees — Justice Amy Coney Barrett, Gorsuch and Kavanaugh — were on board.

A month ago, the justices also heard arguments over a uniquely designed Texas law that has succeeded in getting around the Roe and Casey decisions and banned abortions in the nation's second-largest state after about six weeks of pregnancy. The legal dispute over the Texas law revolves around whether the law can be challenged

in federal court, rather than the right to an abortion.

Despite its unusually quick consideration of the issue, the court has yet to rule on the Texas law, and the justices have refused to put the law on hold while the matter is under legal review.

The Mississippi case poses questions central to the abortion right. Mississippi argues that viability of the fetus is an arbitrary standard that doesn't take sufficient account of the state's interest in regulating abortion. It also contends that scientific advances have allowed some babies who were born earlier than 24 weeks to survive, though it does not argue that the line is anywhere near 15 weeks. More than 90% of abortions are performed in the first 13 weeks of pregnancy, well before viability, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

About 100 patients per year get abortions after 15 weeks at the Jackson Women's Health Organization, Mississippi's lone abor-

tion clinic. The facility does not provide abortions after 16 weeks.

But the clinic argues that the court doesn't normally assess constitutional rights based on how few people are affected, and that the justices shouldn't do so in this case.

Joined by the Biden administration, the clinic also says that since Roe, the Supreme Court has consistently held that the "Constitution guarantees 'the right of the woman to choose to have an abortion before viability.'"

Erasing viability as the line between when abortions may and may not be banned would effectively overrule Roe and Casey, even if the justices do not explicitly do that, the clinic says.

Justice Clarence Thomas is the only member of the court who has openly called for Roe and Casey to be overruled. One question is how many of his conservative colleagues are willing to join him.

Among the questions justices ask when they con-

sider jettisoning a previous ruling is not just whether it is wrong, but egregiously so.

That's a formulation Kavanaugh has used in a recent opinion, and Mississippi and many of its allies have devoted considerable space in their court filings to argue that Roe and Casey fit the description of being egregiously wrong.

"The conclusion that abortion is a constitutional right has no basis in text, structure, history, or tradition," Mississippi says.

The clinic responds by arguing that the very same arguments were considered and rejected by the court nearly 30 years ago in Casey. Only the membership of the court has changed since then, the clinic and its allies argue.

In its earlier rulings, the court has rooted the right to abortion in the section of the 14th Amendment that says states cannot "deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."

Same-sex marriage and other rights, based on the same provision but also not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution, could be threatened if Roe and Casey fall, the administration argues. Mississippi and its supporters dispute that those other decisions would be at risk.

Abortion arguments normally would find people camped out in front of the court for days in the hope of snagging some of the few seats available to the public. But with the courthouse closed because of COVID-19, there was only a sparse audience of reporters, justices' law clerks and a handful of lawyers inside the courtroom. A decision is expected by late June, a little more than four months before next year's congressional elections, and could become a campaign season rallying cry. □

**Associated Press**



# Biden HIV/AIDS strategy calls racism 'public health threat'

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Biden administration in its new HIV/AIDS strategy calls racism "a public health threat" that must be fully recognized as the world looks to end the epidemic. The strategy released Wednesday on the annual commemoration of World AIDS Day is meant to serve as a framework for how the administration intends to shape its policies, research, programs and planning over the next three years. President Joe Biden was scheduled to deliver remarks later Wednesday to mark World AIDS Day. "The president remains deeply committed to ensuring that those with HIV are treated with equity and dignity," White House press secretary Jen Psaki said. The new strategy asserts that over generations "structural inequities have resulted in racial and ethnic health disparities that are severe, far-reaching, and unacceptable." New HIV infections in the



President Joe Biden speaks at Dakota County Technical College, in Rosemount, Minn., Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021.

Associated Press

U.S. fell about 8% from 2015 to 2019, but Black and Latino communities — particularly gay and bisexual men within those groups — continue to be disproportionately affected, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data.

African Americans make up about 13% of the U.S. population but accounted for more than 40% of new infections. The Latino population accounted for nearly 25% of new infections but makes up about 18.5% of the U.S. population.

Historically, gay and bisexual men have been the most disproportionately affected group. They account for about 66% of new HIV infections, even though they account for only 2% of the population, according to the CDC. In 2019, 26%

of new HIV infections were among Black gay and bisexual men, 23% among Latino gay and bisexual men, and 45% among gay and bisexual men under the age of 35.

To reduce the disparities, the strategy includes calls for focusing on the needs of disproportionately affected populations, supporting racial justice, combating HIV-related stigma and discrimination and providing leadership and employment opportunities for people with or at risk for HIV.

Besides addressing racism's impact on Americans battling the virus or at risk of contracting it, the new strategy also puts greater emphasis on harm reduction and syringe service programs, encourages reform of state laws that criminalize behavior of people with HIV for potentially exposing others and adds focus on the needs of the growing population of people with HIV who are aging. □

# 1st U.S. case of COVID omicron variant confirmed in California

By **MICHAEL BALSAMO and ZEKE MILLER**

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — A person in California who had been vaccinated against COVID-19 became the first in the U.S. to have an identified case of the omicron variant, the White House announced Wednesday as scientists continue to study the risks posed by the new virus strain.

Dr. Anthony Fauci told reporters the person was a traveler who returned from South Africa on Nov. 22 and tested positive on Nov. 29. Fauci said the person was vaccinated but had not received a booster shot and was experiencing "mild symptoms."

The Biden administration moved late last month to restrict travel from Southern Africa where the variant was first identified and had been widespread. Clusters of cases have also been identified in about two dozen other nations.

"We knew that it was just a matter of time before the first case of omicron would be detected in the United States," Fauci said.

He said the person was improving and added, "I think what's happening now is another example of why it's important for people to get vaccinated. But also boosting. Boosting is very important."

Officials said they had contacted everyone who had close contact with the person and they had all tested negative.

Genomic sequencing was conducted at the University of California, San Francisco and the sequence was confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is taking steps to tighten U.S. testing rules for travelers from overseas, including requiring a test for all travelers within a day of boarding a flight to the U.S. regardless

of vaccination status. It was also considering mandating post-arrival testing.

Officials said those measures would only "buy time" for the country to learn more about the new variant and to take appropriate precautions, but that given its transmissibility its arrival in the U.S. was inevitable.

Much remains unknown about the new variant, including whether it is more contagious than previous strains, whether it makes people more seriously ill, and whether it can thwart the vaccine. Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease expert, said more would be known about the omicron strain in two to four weeks as scientists grow and test lab samples of the virus.

California's Department of Public Health credited the state's "large-scale testing and early detection systems" for identifying the case.

"We recognize that every-



Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, speaks during the daily briefing at the White House in Washington, Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021.

Associated Press

one is exhausted, and the news of a new variant can be overwhelming. It is important that we collectively focus on the things we know prevent the spread of COVID-19, and its variants," state public health officials said in a statement. The announcement of the first U.S. case comes before President Joe Biden plans to outline his strategy on Thursday to combat the

virus over the winter. Biden has tried to quell alarm over the omicron variant, saying it was a cause for concern but "not a cause for panic." Biden and public health officials have grown more urgent in their pleas for more Americans to get vaccinated — and for those who have been vaccinated to get booster shots to maximize their protection against the virus. □



# Michigan teen charged in Oxford High School shooting

By **COREY WILLIAMS and ED WHITE**

**OXFORD TOWNSHIP, Mich.**

**(AP)** — A 15-year-old boy was charged Wednesday with murder, terrorism and other counts for a shooting that killed four fellow students and injured others at Michigan's Oxford High School.

Charges against Ethan Crumbley were announced Wednesday, a few hours after authorities reported the death of a fourth teen from the school in southeastern Michigan. Crumbley is charged as an adult with one count of terrorism causing death, four counts of first-degree murder and seven counts of assault with intent to murder. Prosecutor Karen McDonald did not reveal a possible motive for the shooting Tuesday at Oxford High School, located in a community of about 22,000 people roughly 30 miles (48 kilometers) north of Detroit. However, she said prosecutors are "confident" they can show the crime was premeditated.

"There is a mountain of digital evidence. Videotape, social media, all digital evidence possible," she said. Deputies rushed to the



Students attend a vigil at LakePoint Community Church in Oxford, Mich., Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021. **Associated Press**

school around lunch time and arrested the suspect in a hallway within minutes. He put his hands in the air as deputies approached, Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard said late Tuesday at a news conference.

The boy's father on Friday bought the 9 mm Sig Sauer used in the shooting, Bouchard said. He did not know why the man bought the semi-automatic handgun, which his son had

been posting pictures of and practicing shooting, Bouchard said.

The four students who were killed were identified as 16-year-old Tate Myre, 14-year-old Hana St. Juliana, 17-year-old Madisyn Baldwin and 17-year-old Justin Shilling, who died Wednesday.

Bouchard said Myre died in a patrol car as a deputy tried to get him to an emergency room. A teacher who received a graze

wound to the shoulder left the hospital, but seven students ranging in age from 14 to 17 remained hospitalized through the night with gunshot wounds, he said. The gun the boy was carrying had seven more rounds of ammo in it when he surrendered, Bouchard said. Undersheriff Mike McCabe said the student's parents advised their son not to talk to investigators. Police must seek permission from a juvenile's parents or guard-

ian to speak with them, he added.

After the attack, authorities learned of social media posts about threats of a shooting at the roughly 1,700-student school. The sheriff stressed how crucial it is for such tips to be sent to authorities, while also cautioning against spreading social media rumors before a full investigation.

McCabe downplayed the significance of a situation in early November when a deer's head was thrown off the school roof, which he said was "absolutely unrelated" to the shooting. The incident prompted school administrators to post two letters to parents on the school's website, saying they were responding to rumors of a threat against the school but had found none.

Bouchard said the student in custody in the shooting had no previous run-ins with his department, and he was not aware of any disciplinary history at school.

"That's part of our investigation to determine what happened prior to this event and if some signs were missed, how were they missed and why," he said. □

# Summer lawsuit trial seen in deadly Florida condo collapse



In this June 25, 2021 file photo, rescue personnel work at the remains of the Champlain Towers South condo building in Surfside, Fla.

**Associated Press**

By **CURT ANDERSON**  
**AP Legal Affairs Writer**

A summer trial is likely for lawsuits seeking millions of dollars in damages from the collapse of a Florida beachfront condominium

that killed 98 people, a judge said Wednesday.

The time frame for a trial to begin would be July or August, Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Michael Hanzman said at a hearing. He add-

ed that he won't look with favor on delays.

"I'm not granting extensions or continuances. Not in this case," Hanzman said. "Come next summer, we're going to be picking a jury in this case. It's not going to go beyond that."

The lawsuits filed in the aftermath of the 12-story Champlain Towers South collapse on June 24 in Surfside seek to affix blame and collect money for the victims, family members and property owners.

The collapse came as the building was undergoing its 40-year recertification, which likely meant steep assessments for condo owners to finance structural and other problems identified several years earlier.

One potential class-action case that could resolve

the entire legal matter was filed last month, contending that excavation and construction of a luxury building next door worsened serious structural defects that already existed at Champlain Towers South. The developers and others involved in construction of the adjacent 18-story Eighty Seven Park tower who are listed as defendants deny their construction work contributed to the tragedy.

Hanzman said he would probably set a firm summer trial date in January.

It's also possible the case could be settled before a trial is held.

A mediator is working to figure out how to allocate lawsuit damages, insurance proceeds and land sale money between

wrongful death victims and those who lost only property. The land where the condo once stood could sell for \$120 million or more once all bids have been received.

"We have been working nonstop to resolve these issues," said Judd Rosen, a lawyer for one group of victims.

"Nothing would make the court happier," Hanzman said.

Meanwhile, investigations into the cause of the collapse are ongoing and will be augmented by work of experts hired to collect evidence for lawsuits.

The lead investigating agency, the National Institute for Standards and Technology, recently estimated its probe could take as long as two years. □



# U.S., S. Korea to bolster alliance at talks but questions remain

By HYUNG-JIN KIM

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

— U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin arrived in South Korea on Wednesday for annual security talks expected to bolster the countries' decades-long military alliance in the face of North Korean nuclear threats and mounting challenges from China.

The U.S.-South Korea alliance "is the linchpin of peace and security in this region," Austin tweeted after landing.

But how substantially the alliance, sealed in the bloodshed of the 1950-53 Korean War, can be solidified is in doubt as South Korea remains locked in thorny historical disputes with Japan another key American regional ally and hesitates to actively join U.S.-led efforts to curb China's rising strength.

"The alliance faces some obstacles. It's not desirable for the South Korea-Japan history issue and other problems to work as obstacles" in South Korea's national security, said Moon Seong Mook, a retired South Korean army general and analyst at the Korea Research Institute for National Strat-



South Korean Defense Minister Suh Wook, left, speaks during the 6th South Korea-U.S. Alliance Night as U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin watches in Seoul, South Korea, Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021.

Associated Press

egy.

The meeting Thursday between Austin and his South Korean counterpart, Suh Wook, comes after the Pentagon released the results of a global posture review earlier this week. The review directs additional cooperation with allies and partners to deter "potential Chinese military aggression and threats from North Korea," while informing Austin's approval of the

permanent stationing of a previously rotational attack helicopter squadron and artillery division headquarters in South Korea.

Boo Seung-Chan, a spokesman at South Korea's Defense Ministry, said Tuesday the U.S. decision to permanently deploy the helicopter and artillery units was proof that both countries highly value their alliance. Some experts said the alliance was at risk in recent

years as then-President Donald Trump threatened to withdraw the 28,500 American troops stationed in South Korea if Seoul failed to drastically increase its financial support for them, and repeatedly complained of the cost of regular military drills with South Korea.

After his landmark first summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in 2018, Trump baffled many by uni-

laterally announcing the suspension of major summertime military drills between the U.S. and South Korea, calling them "very provocative" and "tremendously expensive."

But such worries have gradually eased since Trump's successor, Joe Biden, said he would restore Washington's alliances throughout the world.

In Thursday's meeting, the allies are expected to announce a strengthening of their ties and the U.S. security commitment to South Korea, Moon said. Although such announcements aren't something new, Moon said it would still "discomfort North Korea, which basically aims to drive a wedge between South Korea and the U.S." amid stalled nuclear disarmament talks.

South Korea has been struggling to strike a balance between the U.S., its most important security ally, and China, its biggest trading partner. South Korea suffered economic retaliation from China after allowing the U.S. to install a missile defense system in its territory in 2017 which Beijing views as a security threat. □

# NATO chief says mission creep, corruption hurt Afghan effort

Associated Press

RIGA, Latvia (AP)

— NATO became a victim of mission creep in Afghanistan as the international community upped its aims from fighting extremists to rebuilding the conflict-torn country over two decades, the military organization's civilian leader said Wednesday.

"That broader task proved much more difficult, so we must ensure that our levels of ambition remain realistic," NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said after chairing a meeting of alliance foreign ministers in Latvia where a report on lessons learned in Afghanistan was discussed.

NATO took over the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan in 2003, almost two years after a U.S.-led coalition in-

vaded the country to oust the Taliban for harboring Osama bin Laden, the al-Qaida leader who masterminded the Sept. 11 terror attacks and was shot dead in Pakistan in 2011.

The international force helped build up an Afghan army said to be around 300,000-strong, although the army was so riddled with corruption that its real troop numbers were unclear. Whatever its size, the Afghan army withered within days in August in the face of a Taliban offensive. Stoltenberg said the Afghan security forces "were hampered by corruption, poor leadership, and an inability to sustain their own forces," despite years of international support. "For the future, we must ensure that NATO training efforts

create more self-sustaining forces," he said.

More than 100,000 people were evacuated from Kabul in late August during the frenzied final days of a U.S. airlift after President Joe Biden said American troops would leave. Thousands of Afghans remained, desperate to escape the uncertainty of Taliban rule.

Referring to the debacle at Kabul Airport, where a bomb attack was launched and desperate Afghans clung to a departing transport plane, Stoltenberg said that "we should explore how to strengthen NATO's ability to conduct short-notice, large scale non-combatant evacuation efforts." The report presented Wednesday required no vote. The job of identifying lessons was han-



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg gestures as he opens the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Riga, Latvia, Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021.

Associated Press

dled by NATO's 30 deputy national envoys, under the lead of Assistant Secretary General for Operations John Manza, along with several experts.

NATO makes decisions unanimously, and Manza said it would be impossible to reach consensus on such

a document. Stoltenberg said NATO will make "the main findings" public. Stoltenberg and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken insisted that NATO had helped prevent the launch of international extremist attacks from Afghan soil for almost two decades. □



# U.N. rights chief: Burkina Faso is facing a security crisis

By **SAM MEDNICK**

**Associated Press**

**OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP)** —

If insecurity in Burkina Faso keeps up, the West African nation could spiral into a humanitarian and human rights “catastrophe,” the U.N. human rights chief said Wednesday.

Michelle Bachelet, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, spoke to The Associated Press during her first visit to the war-weakened nation, which has seen an escalation in human rights abuses by its own security forces as it attempts to tackle a jihadi insurgency linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group.

During her four-day trip, Bachelet visited the hard-hit Sahel region and spoke to key players, including President Roch Marc Christian Kabore, religious leaders, civil society groups and victims of human rights abuses.

“Burkina Faso is in the grip of not one but several major, intersecting crises,” she said. “I stressed with President Kabore, it is essential that all perpetrators of such human rights violations and



**Protestors take to the streets of Burkina Faso's capital Ouagadougou Saturday Nov. 27, 2021, calling for President Roch Marc Christian Kabore to resign.**

**Associated Press**

abuses be brought to justice, regardless of their affiliation.”

Bachelet's visit comes as accusations of human rights abuses by the security forces and jihadis are increasing. Last week at least 15 people were allegedly killed by the army in the southwest, according to civil society groups.

Human Rights Watch said

it's investigating allegations that at least 18 women were raped by jihadis in the town of Dablo, said Corinne Dufka, the group's West Africa director.

“Burkina Faso has been rocked by atrocities by jihadis and pro-government forces alike in violence which has killed hundreds, decimated entire villages, and left untold broken lives

in its wake,” said Dufka, urging that Bachelet's visit bring this suffering into focus and pressure all armed groups to stop waging war on civilians.

As security decreases, the security forces will likely resort to more aggressive and extrajudicial tactics to try and stem the problem, which will lead to a vicious cycle of dis-

trust and the inability to control the situation, said Laith Alkhouri, CEO of Intelonyx Intelligence Advisory, which provides intelligence analysis. “Should reports of human rights abuses go unchecked, it will lead to further distrust in the government's ability to address security concerns.”

Residents are growing increasingly frustrated at the government's inability to stem the violence. Protesters threw rocks and security forces fired tear gas during a protest last week calling for the president's resignation. More protests are planned.

Bachelet said Burkina Faso has a tradition of ensuring the peaceful coexistence of its people and called on the government to create a space for meaningful dialogue and for parties to air grievances.

While the government has launched investigations into allegations of human rights abuses by the security forces, no one has been convicted.

Meanwhile, civilians who accuse the army of killing or disappearing their relatives are asking the government to stop the abuse. □

# WHO nations launch steps toward deal to fight pandemics

By **JAMEY KEATEN**

**GENEVA (AP)** —

The head of the World Health Organization hailing a key step by its member states on Wednesday to launch work toward an international agreement to help prevent, prepare for and respond to future pandemics in the wake of COVID-19.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the consensus decision during a special session of the U.N. health agency's members was a “cause for celebration.” It sets off work to establish an “intergovernmental negotiating body” to draft an agreement on pandemics that will take several years to be finalized, if concluded at all.

“Of course, there is still a long road ahead. There are still differences of opinion



**World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus delivers a speech during the launch of a multiyear partnership with Qatar on making the FIFA Football World Cup 2022 and mega sporting events healthy and safe, at the WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, 18 October 2021.**

**Associated Press**

about what a new accord could or should contain,” he said.

The consensus statement falls short of calls from European Union nations and many other countries seek-

ing to agree that the ultimate aim of the effort will be to draft a “legally binding” convention or treaty, hoping to give it teeth and act now while public attention on the pandemic is still

high.

But the United States, Brazil and a handful of other countries were reticent, diplomats said, with U.S. officials arguing that the substance of any future agreement was a higher priority for now that giving it a name like convention or treaty.

Tedros spoke as the emergence of the new omicron variant has captured attention worldwide, rattling stock markets and causing many countries to restrict travel.

The special session, organized months ago in response to COVID-19, was only the second since the WHO was founded in 1948. An international “instrument” on pandemics aims to resemble a similar international agreement on fighting tobacco use.

Under the planned timeline, the intergovernmental negotiating body is expected to hold its first meeting by March to look into “ways of working and timelines,” WHO said. A second meeting by August would discuss efforts towards creating a working draft.

Talks are expected to continue until a report could be presented to the WHO's assembly in 2024.

Many countries and the U.N. health agency have been trying to rein in disjointed national responses, including sporadic travel bans and other restrictive measures; overcome political squabbles; and improve transparency by countries — in the wake of criticism of China's early handling of the outbreak when it first came to light nearly two years ago. □



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## EXPLAINER: What are Colombia's ex-FARC splinter groups?

By **ASTRIN SUÁREZ** and  
**MANUEL RUEDA**

Associated Press

**BOGOTÁ, Colombia (AP)**

— The Biden administration revoked the terrorist designation of Colombia's former FARC guerrilla army on Tuesday, five years after the rebel group signed a peace deal with the government. However, it imposed the same designation on two splinter groups that are still fighting in remote pockets of the South American country.

The FARC holdouts newly designated by the United States as foreign terrorist organizations are the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army known by the Spanish acronym of FARC-EP and Segunda Marquetalia.

Here are more details on these newly designated terrorist groups:

### HOW DID THE SPLINTER GROUPS ARISE?

After five decades of internal conflict that killed an



**Rodrigo Granda, right, a former rebel commander and member of the FARC political party, shakes hands with Rocio Lopez, sister of two kidnap victims, who were eventually released, during a ceremony where former FARC members apologized to locals for the kidnappings they carried out over decades in the rural area of Pipiral near Villavicencio, Colombia, Oct. 29, 2020.**

Associated Press

estimated 26,000 people and forced more than 6 million to flee their homes, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia signed a peace deal in which 13,000 fighters gave up

their weapons in exchange for numerous concessions from the government, including development programs for rural areas and the opportunity for former guerrilla leaders to partici-

pate in local politics and avoid time in prison.

But a group of about 1,000 fighters led by commander Néstor Gregorio Vera refused to lay down their weapons and continued

to conduct attacks and kidnappings in southeastern Colombia. These fighters now use the acronym FARC-EP.

In 2019, three years after the peace deal was signed, former FARC commander Iván Márquez announced he would be taking up arms again in a video shot at an undisclosed location, creating the Segunda Marquetalia group.

Márquez, whose real name is Luciano Marin, was the FARC's lead negotiator during peace talks with the government.

He accused the Colombian government of not keeping its promises and of failing to stop the murders of dozens of former FARC fighters.

When Márquez announced his return to arms, the former FARC commander and some of his close associates were under investigation for drug trafficking in Colombia and the United States. □

## New Zealand to send military, police to Solomon Islands

**WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)** — New Zealand will send up to 65 military and police personnel to the Solomon Islands in the com-

ing days after rioting and looting broke out there last week over several issues, including concerns about the country's increasing

links with China.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Wednesday she was "deeply concerned" by the civil unrest that unfolded in the capital, Honiara, and wanted to help restore peace and stability. The New Zealand deployment follows similar actions from Australia, Papua New Guinea and Fiji after the Solomon Islands government requested international help.

Solomon Islands police found three bodies in a burned-out building and arrested more than 100 people amid the violence. The latest deployment of foreign personnel comes

ahead of a push by Solomon Islands opposition leader Matthew Wale to hold a no-confidence vote next week on Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare.

"This is a short-term, immediate response and we will continue to monitor the situation," said New Zealand's Foreign Affairs Minister Nanaia Mahuta.

New Zealand plans to send 15 military personnel Thursday followed by up to 50 more military and police personnel over the weekend.

The unrest was sparked by underlying grievances between the two main islands in a rivalry that dates back decades.

Part of the concern relates to the country's increasing links with China. Sogavare has been widely criticized by leaders of the island of Malaita for a 2019 decision to drop diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favor of mainland China.

Sogavare's government, meanwhile, has been upset over millions in U.S. aid promised directly to Malaita, rather than through the central government on the largest island of Guadalcanal, where Honiara is located. Sogavare has blamed outside interference for stirring up the protests calling for his resignation, with a thinly veiled reference to Taiwan and the U.S. □



**Australian Federal Police inspect burnt out areas of Chinatown in Honiara, Solomon Islands, Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2021.**

Associated Press



# LOCAL



## Aruba signed an agreement with URBAN HYDRO TECH SURINAM



**ORANJESTAD – Agriculture in Aruba is limited due to factors like high water and energy prices, limited land and extreme temperatures caused by climate change. These factors make it difficult to produce on medium or great scale, in an innovative and sustainable way. During the pandemic, there were concerns about the availability of fruits and vegetables since Aruba depends greatly on imported food. Additionally the increased shipping costs had a negative impact on the price of the imported food products.**

In the past 4 years however, there has been an increase in interest for agriculture using Hydroponics, which is a very modern system to grow food and guarantees successful crops. This seems like a possible solution to the

challenges mentioned above, and this modern and innovative system has intrigued the younger generation.

In 2016, the Santa Rosa together with the TNO, conducted a study on the variety of crops including local crops that have been successfully harvested in Aruba like beans, cucumbers and okra's. The study concluded that hydroponics offers the possibility for diversification on the variety of crops. Another factor that limits small entrepreneurs from starting their modern agriculture project is the high cost of the start-up equipment and fertilizers required for the production. These factors make it unattractive and does not help to stimulate more people to invest in these systems. A hydroponic system can be built with materials purchased locally and is pretty easy to install.

As the authority of the Primary Sector in Aruba, Santa Rosa recognizes the importance of Hydroponics and the opportunities that this offers to the agriculture sector. In connection with this system, a research was done on the system being used in Surinam. Santa Rosa approached Hydroponics Technologies Suriname, who developed a medium size, more simplified and compact system where a cooperative handles the sales. This cooperative mod-

el offers a variety of workshops to those interested and provide support when needed, product availability and is responsible for the promotion and sales, which generates income to make the cooperative self-sustainable.

Clients or artisan producers have expressed their need for knowledge on how to produce in a hydroponic system but wanted a small scale system to start with. In the past, the company Hydroponic Technologies Surinam approached the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery with an offer to start a project in Aruba together with the DLVV to create awareness, educate and present the possibilities of producing fresh produce locally while contributing to the local economy with their micro business. Unfortunately the

pandemic caused this project to come to a halt.

The management of the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fishery, better known as Santa Rosa, is extremely happy for the support and cooperation received from Minister Arénds who immediately after receiving the presentation from the Director of Urban Hydro Tech Surinam, Mr. Delano Pontit, announced the green light to continue with this project in Aruba.

The agreement was recently formalized between the Government and Urban Hydro Tech Surinam in the presence of Mrs. Nathalie Maduro, Director of Santa Rosa and Mrs. Karin Paris, Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Integrity, Nature, Transport and the Elderly. The project will officially start in January 2022. □

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## 289 EPB students enjoy Property Orientation the ATSA resorts



**ORANJESTAD -** Mid-November EPB San Nicolas, and EPB Oranjestad students were transported to participating Aruba Time Share Association resorts where upon arrival they were greeted by the General Manager or Management representative, who escorted them to a meeting room for an official welcome and presentation, for the purpose of Aruba Timeshare Association resort discovery.

Over the span of two days, the timeshare properties, opened their doors to inform and educated EPB students regarding the hotel industry on the island. The students, toured all departments, and were given a general overview of the daily activities required to service guests and help drive Aruba's successful hospitality industry.

"We view this visit as vital," explains ATSA President, hotelier Luigi Heredia, "as high school students face their potential employers for the first time, we try to motivate them to join the industry and become passionate about what we do."

The students and their mentors hail from both the Hato and San Nicholas EPB schools, and they report enjoying the visit and the refreshments at the end of the morning.

ATSA has been hosting the visits for a number of years, in an effort to exposed youngsters in the basic professional education cycle, to hospitality. Among participating re-

sorts this year, Amsterdam Manor Beach Resort, La Quinta Beach Resort, Costa Linda Beach Resort, Casa del Mar Beach Resort, Playa Linda Beach Resort, Eagle Aruba Resort & Casino, Caribbean Palm Village, and Paradise Beach Villas.

Pictured here snapshots from a much enjoyed day! As our picture show, the student itineraries were carefully crafted to cover the departments such as Maintenance, Food and Beverage, Front Desk, Housekeeping, Administra-

tion, Security, and Sales. Tours were conducted by the Department Managers, and Supervisors. The resorts also orchestrated a feedback session just before serving students refreshments and lunch, where the focus remained on great interaction, involvement and passion. Topics

covered: Overall management structure and the number of departments in the resort; Individual departmental structure; Dress codes for the industry; Being service-minded; Discipline on the job; Career and growth opportunities and having fun at what you do. □



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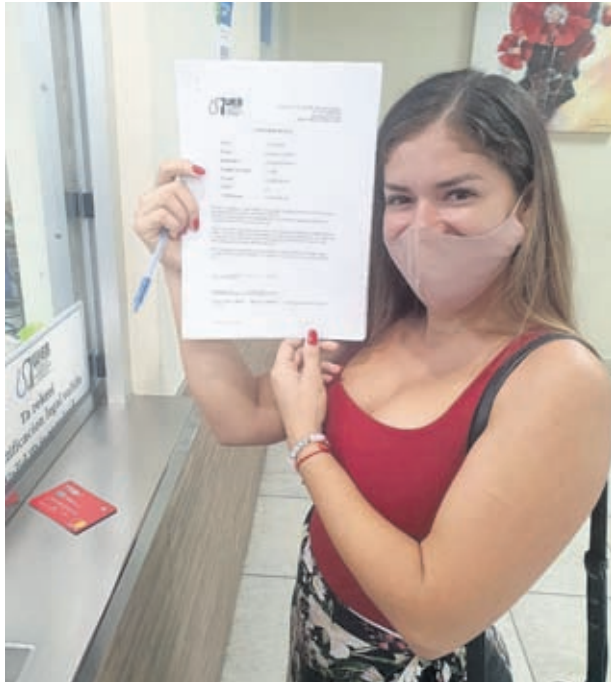
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## Over a decade in business, Aruba Living Today: Offering the so much needed human touch



**NOORD —** We are quickly approaching 2022. It's been a wild ride with Covid-19 and we all are aiming for a change of routine. We simply want to "live" life again. "It is time for living your dream," as the quote says at Aruba Living Today's office. "We are ten plus years in business, and I am proud to say that all our clients stuck with us. We are no part of a big company, we keep it small, personal, and real. Because you are not a number, no sales target either and certainly your name is not commission. Our responsibility is to make your dream come true," says owner Randolph Arends.

### Tempting times

Do you remember the feeling as a kid, when you went to the store with your mom and the baker gave you a sweet roll, the butcher a slice of ham and they all took time to talk to each other? That time when doing groceries on a Saturday meant fun, making friends, and creating connections. To be fully aware in the moment and enjoying the time together sounds like a controversy today. Everything is



efficient, there's no-time-to-waste and while doing one task the mind is already thinking ahead to what is next on your to-do list. Did Covid-19 teach us anything? Weren't we telling each other during the lockdown that we would pay more attention to each other? Wasn't the message that health and happiness is so much more valuable than hitting targets and implement to-do tasks? The pandemic prevents us from connecting physically. Tight hugs and shaking hands firmly are no longer a natural thing. We live in a world of face masks hides smiles, and hands are sanitized after each touch. This is not who we are. We are in search for connection.

### From human to human

If you have decided to buy a house or rent one for vacation in Aruba and you are looking for that match, the question now is how to click with a person that offers a personal touch? One who pays genuine attention and has sincere interest in what you want? This different approach to real estate is what sets Aruba Living Today apart, and the reason Randolph calls himself a property mediator instead of a real estate broker. "The personal touch is essential to me. I am stepping aside of the image that real estate brokers are only in for the commission. This image does not fit me at all, I am in for my passion, and I can only do this from the heart."

### One stop shopping point

Services offered by Aruba Living Today are House and Land Sales, Rentals, Investments, Property Management, Vacation Rental, Mortgages, Insurances, Maintenance, Assist in Arrangements for Notary and Utilities, Guiding Bureaucracy Process and Assisting in Import of Furniture. Randolph and his business partner Berend Prenger are a fantastic, experienced duo, each of them specialists in the field. Berend is also a certified appraiser within the Dutch Kingdom meaning he does your appraisal report that is accepted by all banks and he delivers within three days. "This definitely speeds up the process of buying," Prenger adds.

### You are welcome to meet in person

Aruba Living Today houses in an authentic Aruban house, welcoming you in a warm ambiance that emphasizes the philosophy of connecting. Candles, Buddha ornaments and a homey setting form the décor for you to sit and talk about your dream house or investment. "My goal was to do real estate in a different way when I established this company June 1st 2009. Not from the perspective of only selling, but to look for the perfect match between dream house and client. My philosophy is: it will only work when all involved are happy and connected by that personal touch."

Aruba Living Today caters for both local and foreign market divided into 40 % local buyers and 60 % foreign buyers. "Our customers come from Holland, Belgium, Norway, Germany, UK, Russia, Latin America, United States and Canada. We are widely covered and thus provable good with different cultures, also we speak four languages." Besides that, Aruba Living Today is open to every budget, they have listings for all category buyers. As a member of the Aruban Real Estate Association, they are listed also on the website [www.arubalisting.com](http://www.arubalisting.com) within a group of 20 of the most advanced realtors on the island. Aruba Living Today is featured on House Hunters, social media, Aruba Living Today and of course in Aruba Today's newspaper. □

### Aruba Living Today

Tankileendert 291, Aruba  
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Fax +297 587 9985  
Cell +297 593 9177  
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# Should You Bank With Your Brokerage?

By **CHANELLE BESSETTE** of **NerdWallet**

If you've invested with a brokerage firm in recent years, you may have noticed that your brokerage offers a product called a cash management account. These accounts are very similar to a checking or savings account and typically provide competitive interest rates, debit cards and other money management features. However, those services aren't always standard.

So what, then, would be the appeal of opening a CMA with a brokerage? Here are some things to consider when deciding whether to let your brokerage help you manage your cash.

## HOW ARE CASH MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS DIFFERENT FROM BANK ACCOUNTS?

Perhaps the most crucial distinction between a CMA and a bank account is that CMAs are offered by non-bank financial institutions that do not possess a bank charter. Usually, this would mean that CMAs cannot provide their customers federal insurance on their balances, but many brokerages partner with chartered banks that sweep customers' funds into bank accounts behind the scenes. That allows them to offer insurance from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation on customer



A sign outside of a Fidelity Investments office in the Century City section of Los Angeles is shown June 16, 2016.

Associated Press

balances.

## WHAT ARE THE PROS AND CONS OF CASH MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS?

### PROS

—Interest rates tend to be higher than rates at traditional banks. Though some brokerages don't offer much interest on their CMAs, others offer significantly higher interest rates than the national average of 0.06% for savings accounts. Robinhood Cash Management, for example, offers 0.30%, and SoFi Money offers 0.25% with a \$500 minimum balance.

—CMAs have benefits that are similar to checking and savings accounts. Some

CMAs offer such account benefits as free ATM access, debit cards, mobile check deposit, early direct deposit and no monthly maintenance fees.

—Transfers between CMAs and investing accounts can be faster. When you have a CMA at your brokerage, you may be able to avoid a waiting period between account transfers so that you can invest your money faster.

Joel Parker, a financial blogger and podcaster from Massachusetts, has a Fidelity Cash Management Account and appreciates the speed of transfers that would otherwise take be-

tween one and three days from a non-Fidelity account.

"I use Fidelity for my daughter's 529 account, and it is nice that I can do a transfer to that account instantly," Parker says. "If I had my primary brokerage account with Fidelity, it would be the same way."

### CONS

—Interest rates have dropped. The financial industry is currently in a low-rate environment, meaning interest rates on deposit accounts are particularly low at the moment. Several CMAs that launched in recent years had notably high interest rates at first,

but they dropped significantly in mid-2020 after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

—FDIC insurance is usually only available through third-party banks. Since brokerage firms aren't banks, they typically have to partner with banks to offer FDIC insurance. Brokerages sweep customer funds into FDIC-insured accounts behind the scenes so that they're covered.

—CMA customer service is typically online-only. Most CMA providers offer only remote customer service because they don't have branches. As a result, customers who open an account will need to be comfortable with service options that aren't in person.

## CAN A CASH MANAGEMENT ACCOUNT MAKE IT EASIER TO INVEST?

When it comes to investing, timing can be critical. For example, missing a day or two of having your cash in the market — say, the amount of time it takes to transfer cash from an outside account into your investing account — could mean losing out on market gains. By having all of your accounts in one place, you can take advantage of vital time in the market to potentially earn more money on your cash. □

# Capital One drops all overdraft fees, latest bank to do so

By **KEN SWEET**  
**AP Business Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Capital One said Wednesday that will get rid of all overdraft fees, the latest bank to do so this year and one of the largest financial institutions to shy away from the long-hated practice.

The Virginia-based bank said it will still allow customers to overdraft, but it will no longer charge a fee to do so. Any eligible customers can opt into fee-free overdraft at any times, the bank said.

A number other banks have announced this year — Ally Bank and regional

banking giant PNC for example — that they would end overdraft fees or create programs that would greatly lower the chance a customer would get hit with an overdraft fees.

In an email to employees, Capital One CEO Richard Fairbank said the move was part of "our effort to bring ingenuity, simplicity and humanity" back to banking.

That said, overdraft fees are still a prevalent practice in banking, often causing millions of bank customers to pay \$34 for a cup of coffee. The Consumer Financial Protection Bu-

reau released a study on Wednesday that showed the industry brought in \$15.5 billion in overdraft fees in 2019, of which three banks — JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo and Bank of America — made up 44% of that revenue.

Consumer advocates applauded the move, especially since Capital One is one of the nation's largest banks.

"Capital One's complete elimination of overdraft and NSF (non-sufficient funds) fees is a landmark moment for American families," said Lauren Saunders, associate director at the



A branch office of Capitol One Bank is shown Thursday, May 7, 2009, in New York.

Associated Press

National Consumer Law Center, in a statement. □



## CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS** 43 Store

1 Cheated, patron  
in slang

6 Pork  
servings

11 Baghdad  
native

12 TV's  
Mandel

13 Diner  
pages

14 Building  
wing

15 Golf ball  
feature

17 Strange

19 Nettle

20 Butter unit

23 Liner trip

25 Bowling  
site

26 Cheer-  
leader  
stunts

28 Some  
sheep

29 Hawk

30 Hosp.  
workers

31 Play  
judge

32 Dripping

33 Snake-  
haired  
Gorgon

35 Coffee bar  
order

38 Forum  
garb

41 Blow  
away

42 Wear  
away

### DOWN

1 That  
fellow

2 Mine yield

3 Sahara  
sights

4 Prefix for  
distant or  
angular

5 Shrug off

6 Blackboard  
need

7 Sharpen

8 Hold title to

9 Chart  
model

10 Kinsey  
topic

16 Got ready

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Yesterday's answer

17 Earthy  
color

18 Sketched  
book

20 Popular  
feature

21 Slant

22 Stopwatch  
ointment

24 Check-  
runner

25 Pot part

27 Proved  
spots

40 Spot

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41						42			
43						44			

12-2

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-2

### CRYPTOQUOTE

P K N J N R P D B A P Z I N P B

H Y H H A E R P Z J N I S Z X B J B J A

J X Z P K N X — B T G P K N A ' V V

R N P P V N S Z X B H Y H H A N F N X A

P E Q N — D E T R P Z T H N T G V N P Z T

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: BE CIVIL TO ALL; SOCIABLE TO MANY; FAMILIAR WITH FEW; FRIEND TO ONE; ENEMY TO NONE. — BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

## Heat, no food, deadly weather: Climate change kills seabirds



A mating pair of northern gannets nuzzle on Bonaventure Island off the Gaspé Peninsula, July 31, 2017, in Quebec, Canada.

Associated Press

By PATRICK WHITTLE

Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) —

The warming of the planet is taking a deadly toll on seabirds that are suffering population declines from starvation, inability to reproduce, heat waves and extreme weather.

Climate-related losses have hit albatrosses off the Hawaiian islands, northern gannets near the British Isles and puffins off the Maine coast. Some birds are less able to build nests and raise young as sea levels rise, while others are unable to find fish to eat as the ocean heats up, researchers have found.

Common murre and Cassin's auklets that live off the West Coast have also died in large numbers from conditions scientists directly tied to global warming.

With less food, rising seas that encroach on islands where birds roost and increasingly frequent hurricanes that wipe away nests, many seabirds have been producing fewer chicks, researchers say.

And tern species that live off New England have died during increasing rain

and hailstorms scientists link to climate change. Some species, including endangered roseate terns, also can't fledge chicks because more frequent severe weather kills their young, said Linda Welch, a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The warming world is increasingly inhospitable to many seabirds, Welch said. "In the last couple years, they've experienced widespread nesting failure," she said. "I definitely think there's large ramifications of what we're seeing."

It's difficult to precisely determine the population loss to wide-ranging seabirds and how much is attributable to climate change. But one estimate by researchers from University of British Columbia stated that seabird populations have fallen 70% since the mid-20th century.

Reproductive success also decreased over the last half century for fish-eating seabirds, especially those that live north of the equator, according to a study earlier this year in the journal Science.

Researchers from the Uni-

versity of Washington and other institutions who studied dozens of worldwide seabird species found some were having success breeding at only 10% of historical levels. They also found that in the southern hemisphere, difficulty finding fish has prevented species such as the Magellanic penguin from successfully feeding chicks.

Worldwide, seabirds are in jeopardy largely because of warming ocean temperatures, scientists say. Over the past five decades, more than 90% of the extra heat on the planet from global warming has been absorbed by the ocean, according to U.S. government scientists.

Warming seas, coupled with die-off events that kill thousands of birds by starvation, are making it harder for some species to maintain stable populations, said P. Dee Boersma, a University of Washington biology professor and an author of the Science study.

The seabirds, such as penguins that have declined by nearly three-quarters in South Africa since 1991, are a harbinger of what will happen to wildlife with global warming, Boersma said.

"These ecosystem sentinels are important because they're not only enjoyable for us to be able to see them, but they're important as a signal that we've gone too far," she said.

One of the most serious threats to seabirds is a reduction of plankton and small fish in cold northern waters. Forage fish and plankton loss has led to mass die-offs of birds such as the Cassin's auklets that washed up by the tens of thousands on the Pacific Coast in recent years.

One of the most visible examples of global warming's seabird toll was the die-off of tens of thousands of common murre along the West Coast in the mid-2010s. Nearly 8,000 dead birds washed up on a single beach near Chugach National Forest in Alaska. □

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## New Twitter CEO steps from behind the scenes to high profile

By BARBARA ORTUTAY  
AP Technology Writer

Newly named Twitter CEO Parag Agrawal has emerged from behind the scenes to take over one of Silicon Valley's highest-profile and politically volatile jobs.

But his prior lack of name recognition coupled with a solid technical background appears to be what some big company backers were looking for to lead Twitter out of its current morass.

A 37-year-old immigrant from India, Agrawal comes from outside the ranks of celebrity CEOs, which include the man he's replacing, Jack Dorsey, Face-

book's Mark Zuckerberg, and Elon Musk of SpaceX and Tesla. Those brand-name company founders and leaders have often been in the news — and on Twitter — for exploits beyond the day-to-day running of their companies. Having served as Twitter's chief technology officer for the last four years, Agrawal's appointment was seen by Wall Street as a choice of someone who will focus on ushering Twitter into what's widely seen as the internet's next era the metaverse. □

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## Assistant Director

Xiomara Arends

## Editors

Liza Koolman (Management assistant)

Richard Brooks

## Sales

Linda Reijnders

Sulaika Croes

## Classifieds

[classified@cspnv.com](mailto:classified@cspnv.com)

## Distribution and Collection

[accounting@bondia.com](mailto:accounting@bondia.com)

## Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Pilar Flores

## Columnists

Anthony Croes

Weststraat 22

T: 582-7800

E: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com)

W: [www.arubatoday.com](http://www.arubatoday.com)

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## HEALTH

## DOCTOR ON DUTY

### Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm  
Tel. 527 4000

### San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours  
Tel.524 8833

## PHARMACY ON DUTY

### Oranjestad:

Sta. Anna Tel. 586 8181

### San Nicolas:

Aloe Tel. 584 4606

## OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850  
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002  
Urgent Care 586 0448  
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic  
+297 588 0539

## EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

## TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
A1 Taxi Serv.	280 2828

## TRAVEL INFO

Aruba Airport	524 2424
American Airlines	582 2700
Avianca	588 0059
Jet Blue	588 2244
Surinam	582 7896

## AID FOUNDATIONS

FAVI- Visually Impaired  
Tel. 582 5051

Alcoholics Anonymous  
Tel. 736 2952

Narcotics Anonymous  
Tel. 583 8989

Fundacion Contra Violencia  
Relacional Tel. 583 5400

Centre for Diabetes  
Tel. 524 8888

Child Abuse Prevention  
Tel. 582 4433

Quota Club Tel. 525 2672

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Phone Directory Tel. 118



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# Weather vanes: Exhibit looks at artworks with a purpose

By **KIM COOK**  
**Associated Press**

Perched atop churches, barns, businesses, homes and seats of government, weather vanes have over hundreds of years taken the form of everything from farm animals to pets, story-book figures to race cars. They were invented for one important job: telling which way the wind was blowing. Gradually, they became appreciated as an art form. A new exhibition at the American Folk Art Museum in New York, "American Weathervanes: The Art of the Winds," showcases the history, technical virtuosity and artistic beauty of vanes made between the late 18th and early 20th centuries. The free exhibit runs through Jan. 2. "Weathervanes have always been at once tools and sculptural architectural elements, combining function with visual interest and symbolism," the show's curator, art historian Robert Shaw, writes in a companion book (Rizzoli/Electa). The galleries feature around 50 weather vanes and patterns, along with ephemera like bills of sale, advertisements and vintage photographs. The weather vanes range from simple carved birds,



This image provided by the American Folk Art Museum shows the Hudsonian Curlew weather vane. The museum's curator, Emelie Gevalt, said one of her favorite pieces in the exhibit is the museum's own "Hudsonian Curlew."

**Associated Press**

fish, livestock and dogs to figures that seem to literally be riding the winds — loping ponies, racing horses, fire trucks, and wildly imaginative witches, sea serpents and vehicles with many moving elements. One work, "Dove of Peace," was commissioned by George Washington. An amateur meteorologist, he asked Mount Vernon's architect, Joseph Rakestraw, to design the dove-shaped weather vane with olive branches in its mouth. The museum's curator, Emelie Gevalt, cited the

museum's own "Hudsonian Curlew" as one of her favorites. The 1874 piece is large — nearly 7 feet tall and 4 feet wide. A relatively simple design, it depicts the body and distinctive curved beak of the shorebird in gold-leafed sheet metal, and once sat atop the Curlew Bay sportsmen's club in Seaville, New Jersey. "The magnificent silhouette of this large vane communicates exactly why early 20th century Americans found weathervanes so appealing," Gevalt said.

"The graphic impact is strikingly modern, speaking to the strong intersections between the modern aesthetic and what we call 'folk.'" The exhibit also includes a 62-inch-tall, gilded statue of a Native American with bow and arrow pointed skyward. The work set a record for a weather vane sale, \$5.8 million, at Sotheby's in 2006. Native Americans were a common subject of early American weather-vane art. In the exhibit, Joseph Zordan, consulting scholar and a member of the Bad River Ojibwe, con-

tributed interpretive text about these vanes and the legacy of colonialism. "Inevitably, such images tell us more about the people who made them than those they are said to represent," he said.

## A SIMPLE TOOL

What makes a weather vane work? The arrow on the structure is a balancing weight, so when the wind blows, it — and whatever object is attached above it — turns in that direction. A change in wind direction can mean a storm is coming, so the weather vane was a key tool for farmers or seafarers over the centuries. For people in towns and cities, looking up to see a wildly swinging vane meant it was time to head indoors.

## A LONG HISTORY

Shaw said weather vanes date back at least to the ancient Greeks. In medieval times, they were often fabric flags; later, those flags were made of metal, and some can be seen on public buildings from colonial America. (The ubiquitous rooster? Shaw says that was the result of a papal decree in the 9th century. Plus, the bird's shape made for an efficient capturer of wind direction.) □

# Olivia Rodrigo, H.E.R and The Weeknd win Apple Music Awards



This combination of photos shows The Weeknd performing during the halftime show of the Super Bowl on Feb. 7, 2021, in Tampa, Fla., left, H.E.R. performing at the Spotify Best New Artist 2019 Party in Los Angeles on Feb. 7, 2019, center, and Olivia Rodrigo performing at the American Music Awards in Los Angeles on Nov. 21, 2021.

**Associated Press**

By **MARK KENNEDY**  
**NEW YORK (AP)** — Olivia Rodrigo, H.E.R and The Weeknd have all won honors at a revamped Apple Music Awards, which has grown larger to encom-

pass global music patterns. Rodrigo was named breakthrough artist of the year, her "Sour" was named best album of the year and her "drivers license" was song of the year.

The streaming service crowned H.E.R. as songwriter of the year and The Weeknd was named global artist of the year, a step up from the category last year which was mere artist of the year. "I am very honored and blessed to receive this recognition," H.E.R. said in a statement. "As a young Black and Filipino artist, and a woman who is on the stage giving my all, there's no doubt that representation is important." The Weeknd thanked Apple for the honor and being supportive "not only for my work but also for great music by newer artists where it matters so much for creators to be found

and supported." The Apple Music Awards, now in its third year, also introduced a new category of awards recognizing artists from five countries and regions — Africa, France, Germany, Japan, and Russia — who made the greatest impact culturally and on the charts in their respective countries and regions. The winners are Aya Nakamura for the French region, OFFICIAL HIGE DANDISM for Japan, RIN for Germany, Scriptonite for Russia and Wizkid for Africa. "We're thrilled to honor the artists that are shaping culture and connecting with fans around the world on Apple Music," said Oli-

ver Schusser, Apple's vice president of Apple Music and Beats. "This year we're also recognizing more regional artists, showing the world the impact of extraordinary talented musicians who are making waves globally." The service said winners are chosen through a process that reflects both Apple Music's editorial perspective and what customers around the world are listening to the most. Last year, rapper Lil Baby was named artist of the year by Apple, Taylor Swift was named songwriter of the year and Megan Thee Stallion was honored with breakthrough artist of the year. □



# ACC, Big Ten, Pac-12 launch mental health initiative

By **RALPH D. RUSSO**

**AP College Sports Writer**

The Atlantic Coast Conference, Big Ten and Pac-12 launched an initiative Monday to raise awareness of the importance of mental health as part of their conference alliance announced earlier this year. Teammates for Mental Health will be unveiled this week during basketball games involving the three conferences, including the ACC/Big Ten women's and men's challenges.

The centerpiece will be a public service announcement that will air throughout the 28 games being played from Nov. 29-Dec. 2. The PSA includes men's coach Mike Krzyzewski (Duke) and Wayne Tinkle (Oregon State), Maryland women's coach Brenda Frese and others, and it will air on ESPN, the ACC Network, the Big Ten network and the Pac-12 Network.

The initiative will also include in-arena signage and lapel pins for coaches to wear during games.

The ACC, Big Ten and Pac-12 announced in the summer the conferences were forming an alliance to work together on schedul-



**Maryland head coach Brenda Frese talks with Angel Reese during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game on Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021, in College Park, Md.**

**Associated Press**

ing, plus off-field issues like the future of NCAA governance and athlete welfare. "When the Alliance was formed back in August, people paid a lot of attention to the schedule pieces. And Kevin and I and George have been emphatic that that is a component of it, but you also have major issues from an NCAA standpoint and the future college athletics," ACC Commissioner Jim

Phillips said. "But at the core of it for us is really the student athlete experience."

Pac-12 Commissioner George Kliavkoff said 10 working groups of athletic directors and other administrators and school officials have been meeting regularly over the last four months. Four of the groups are focused on scheduling games and events between the conferences in football, men's and wom-

en's basketball and Olympic sports. The other six are looking at things like compliance, NCAA issues, social responsibility and how best to support mental and physical well-being of athletes.

The Teammates for Mental Health campaign is the first public collaboration to come from the three conferences. Kliavkoff said each conference was already working indepen-

dently on athlete mental health issues.

"But the alliance is all about kind of sharing best practices across the 41 institutions, and across the three conferences, and specifically as it relates to student-athlete health and well-being, we have the experts for each of the conferences, each of the institutions, meeting on a regular basis, recommending and suggesting things that we can do through the alliance to elevate what they do for their student-athletes," Kliavkoff said. The mental health of athletes has taken on growing prominence, with Olympic champion Simone Biles and tennis star Naomi Osaka among those speaking out or taking steps to protect themselves.

The initiative is aimed at encouraging athletes and coaches to be on the lookout for signs that someone close to them is struggling with their mental health.

Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren, who played college basketball, said the pressure on athletes is greater than ever and the attention they receive through social media can compound the stress. □

# Cards, Packers, Bucs remain top 3 in AP Pro32 poll

By **SIMMI BUTTAR**

**NEW YORK (AP)** —

The status quo reigns at the top of the AP Pro32 poll.

The Arizona Cardinals, Green Bay Packers and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers retained the top three spots in the latest poll.

The Cardinals, who were on a bye last week, received eight of the 12 first-place votes for 378 points in balloting Tuesday by media members who regularly cover the NFL.

The Cardinals return to action on Sunday, when they take on the Bears in Chicago.

"The Cardinals are survivalists. They played their last three games without their two best players, QB Kyler Murray and WR DeAndre Hopkins, and managed to win two of them to main-

tain the best record in the NFL at 9-2," said Rick Gosse of Talk of Fame Network. Arizona expects both Murray and Hopkins to play Sunday.

The Packers, who earned the remaining four first-place votes for 368 points, are coming off an impressive 36-28 win over the Los Angeles Rams. Green Bay has a bye this week.

"Aaron Rodgers walked off to chants of 'MVP! MVP!' at Lambeau Field after vanquishing the Rams, and the venerable quarterback welcomed the sentiment," Newsday's Bob Glauber said.

"There's no debate he's in the mix to become the first repeat winner since Peyton Manning in 2009."

The defending champion Buccaneers rallied for a 38-

31 win over the Indianapolis Colts.

The New England Patriots, who have won six in a row and lead the AFC East, continued their surge in the poll as they moved up two spots to No. 4. The Patriots will conclude Week 13 with a Monday night game at the division rival Buffalo Bills. The Bills also moved up in the poll, gaining three spots to No. 7 after they routed the New Orleans Saints on Thanksgiving night.

Another team coming off a bye, the Kansas City Chiefs, slipped a spot to No. 5.

The Baltimore Ravens, after holding off the Cleveland Browns on Sunday night, moved up one place to No. 6.

The reeling Tennessee Titans, who have lost two in a row, will enter their bye



**Tampa Bay Buccaneers' Leonard Fournette (7) celebrates a rushing touchdown during the second half of an NFL football game against the Indianapolis Colts, Sunday, Nov. 28, 2021, in Indianapolis.**

**Associated Press**

week at No. 8 after dropping three places following their loss at New England. The Cincinnati Bengals moved up four spots to No. 9 after topping the Pittsburgh Steelers.

And the No. 10 Dallas Cowboys, coming off an overtime loss to Las Vegas on Thanksgiving, will open Week 13 as they head to New Orleans to take on the Saints. □



# Former player, labor lawyer lead MLB into 9th work stoppage

By **RONALD BLUM** AP Baseball Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Tony Clark was a minor league prospect in the Detroit Tigers' system and Rob Manfred a junior lawyer on Major League Baseball management's legal team during the sport's last work stoppage.

Now, they lead billion-dollar factions of a fractured sport that is headed toward a lockout that would start when the collective bargaining agreement expires at 11:59 p.m. EST Wednesday.

"His voice of being a player resonates with fellow players," leading player agent Scott Boras said this week of Clark, who leads the players' union. "That communication branch is a very important part of the union leadership. And I also think that Tony has now armed himself with a strong legal staff."

Barring unexpected progress during talks at the union's executive board meeting in Irving, Texas, it would be baseball's ninth work stoppage and first since the 7 1/2-month strike of 1994-95 that wiped out the World Series for the first time in 90 years. It also would be the first stoppage since the death of Marvin Miller, who led the players' union through the first five stoppages and was a consultant to Donald Fehr during the next three.

Clark, 49 and a dozen years removed from his last at-bat, stands out in a crowd: He's 6-foot-8 with a deep voice and a beard that has turned a profes-



**Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred, left, and Major League Baseball Players Association executive director Tony Clark speak before Game 1 in baseball's World Series between the Houston Astros and the Atlanta Braves, Oct. 26, 2021, in Houston.**

**Associated Press**

sional white. The former All-Star first baseman is the first former player to head the union, and was hired as director of player relations in March 2010. After union head Michael Weiner was stricken with a malignant brain tumor, he promoted Clark to deputy executive director in July 2013. Clark took over that December following Weiner's death.

"I expected to be tied to the hip with Michael for 20 years," Clark said.

Clark attended his first executive board meeting in 1999, became a team player representative and then an association representative, playing a part in the 2002 and 2006 bargaining sessions as well as negotiations on revisions to the Joint Drug Agreement.

"The idea of him being a

player, you never forget that as part of his resume, but that's not all he is," Curtis Granderson said in 2013. Manfred, the 63-year-old MLB commissioner, is a graduate of the Cornell School of Industrial and Labor Relations and Harvard Law School. He was an associate when his law firm was retained in 1987 as counsel for MLB's Player Relations Committee, assisted in bargaining during the 1990 spring-training lockout and was promoted to partner in 1991.

Manfred assisted again during the 1994-95 strike and when a deal was reached in 1996-97, and then became an MLB executive vice president in 1998 under Commissioner Bud Selig. He led negotiations for labor deals in 2002

and 2006 with then-Chief Operations Officer Bob DuPuy, headed talks in 2011, and succeeded Selig in January 2015.

"Rob is a very seasoned negotiator," said Yankees president Randy Levine, the lead bargainer in 1996-97. "He has the ability to see paths around the corner for settlement because at the end of the day, these issues change but they're basically the same issues that the parties have been negotiating over and talking about for 40 years."

The union's desires for more liberal free agency and salary arbitration rules, and management's preference for spending restraints — such as the luxury tax and brakes on amateur spending — are always among the key components to a

deal. Postseason size and format is also a perennial economic and competitive issue, along with expanding the designated hitter to the National League, a union proposal that MLB has offered to accept this time.

While Deputy Commissioner Dan Halem remains MLB's lead negotiator, Clark replaced Rick Shapiro in 2018 with Bruce Meyer, a former partner at Weil, Gotshal & Manges who has represented the unions in the four major U.S. sports. Boras praised Clark's decision to bring in Meyer, a structure Boras said parallels how Manfred handles negotiating.

"Rob does a lot of communicating with his ownership group has his legal team function in the bargaining area. So I think there is a common structure that now exists between both sides," Boras said.

Both parties appear to think they can outlast the other during a stoppage, a mindset that 27 years ago led to a lengthy strike, causing cancellation of the final 669 games of 1994 and the first 252 games of '95.

Manfred had a close view of the fractious discussions among ownership leading up to Commissioner Fay Vincent's forced resignation in 1992 and during Selig's efforts to build a consensus for bargaining and revenue sharing. MLB's owners have remained more orderly in recent years, but most have not been exposed to the financial and public-relations pressures of a work stoppage. □



**Nashville SC's Walker Zimmerman, center, looks back as the Philadelphia Union celebrates their win following the shoot-out of an MLS playoff soccer match, Sunday, Nov. 28, 2021, in Chester, Pa.**

**Associated Press**

## Zimmerman wins 2nd straight MLS Defender of the Year honor

**By The Associated Press**

Nashville's Walker Zimmerman has won Major League Soccer's Defender of the Year award for the second straight season.

Zimmerman, who also plays for the U.S. national team, is the third player overall and first in more than a decade to earn the MLS award in consecutive

years. Nashville's defense allowed less than a goal per game this season, tied for best in the league. The team has allowed opponents fewer than a goal a game in each of its first two seasons in MLS.

Nashville, which was undefeated at home, also shared the league lead with 13 shutouts this sea-

son.

Zimmerman scored three goals and had a pair of assists this season.

The Defender of the Year honor is determined by vote of team technical staffs, players and media. Zimmerman received 30.97% of the votes. Seattle's Yeimar Gomez was runner up with 16.80%. □